DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 161 140 EA 010 957

AUTHOR Zigarmi, Drea; Sinclair, Ron
TITLE The Effect of a Strike on Organizational Climate and Leadership: A Study of a Middle School.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Environment; Educational Research; Elementary Education; *Leadership Qualities; *Organizational Climate; Secondary Education; Tables (Data); *Teacher Strikes
IDENTIFIERS Leadership Adaptability Style Inventory; Ohio

ABSTRACT

In the 1976-77 academic year, a study conducted at an Ohio middle school revealed the negative effects a strike had on teacher perceptions of climate and leadership. The original focus of the research study was to evaluate the impact of experimental curriculum, but after the unanticipated strike, it was realized that unbiased, prestrike data would be beneficial in the analysis of the effect of a strike on climate and leadership. A pre-post design was used with an author-developed climate questionnaire and the Leadership Adaptability Style Inventory. Both instruments were administered to 40 teachers before and after a two-week district-wide strike. The results show a significant drop in climate in all five attitude subscales of communication, innovation, professionalism, inservice, and decision-making. Also a significant change was noted in the principals' leadership style as measured by the Leadership Adaptability Style Inventory. Most of these changes were related to perceptions of the principal's accessibility and receptivity. The results suggest that a strike costs a system more than money. It inevitably costs the district the goodwill, credibility, and trust that must be present between teachers and administrators and among teachers to truly make a school a humane and productive place. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Drea Zigarmi

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED161140

THE EFFECT OF A STRIKE ON ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND LEADERSHIP: A STUDY OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL

DREA ZIGARMI - Miami University, Oxford, Ohio and
RON SINCLAIR - Morgan Middle School, Yellow Springs, Ohio

INTRODUCTION

Collective bargaining with teachers is a major issue with school administrators, according to a membership study done by the American Association of School Administrators (Education USA 1978). Two thirds of the administrators polled said collective bargaining had a negative effect on the quality of public education in their district (Education USA 1978). Couple this with the fact that teachers account for about one third of all fulltime state and local public employees in the United States and 69 percent of the teachers are members of labor organizations (Report on Education Research 1978), and it is plain to see that school administrators will continue to feel that collective bargaining is a major issue. Even though the frequency of strikes are down, the Census Bureau reports that work stoppages in public schools occurred 377 times in 1975-76 involving 167,136 employees and 1.7 million workdays (Report on Education Research 1978). A great deal has been written on why strikes occur and on how strikes are negotiated and settled, but very little is known about how strikes effect teachers and administrators after the "dust has settled." In this study, an analysis was made in a middle school of teacher-perceived school climate to determine the "human" costs of a strike.

THE RESEARCH ON TEACHER UNIONISM

Until recently most of the research on teacher unionism has been less-than-empirical and very narrow in focus (Blum 1976). Even now much of the literature is perscriptive in nature (Barkelew, 1977; Andrews, 1969; National Elementary Principal, 1977). When not perscriptive in nature, the focus of much of the literature has been centered on a descriptive analysis of the teacher labor

EA 010 957

movement, (Klaus, 1969; Lieberman, 1966) and or on common elements of teacher negotiation process, (Bruno and Nelken, 1975, Blum, 1976).

Some of the more recent research has been concerned with the impact of collective bargaining. In particular, these studies have tried to assess the impact of collective bargaining on teacher salaries, (Kasper, 1970; Thornton, 1970; Baird and Landon, 1972) and on teacher professionalism (Corwin, 1965, Peterson, 1976). Finally, there is a small group of studies which have focused upon the changes that occur in teacher, administrator, and student attitudes as a result of a strike (Hashway, 1977; Willow, 1975; Nicholson and Nasstrom, 1974; and Miskel, 1974).

Most of these studies that deal with impact do not focus on the aftermath of a strike on school climate, although some attempt has been made to assess the impact collective bargaining has had on decision making and school policy (Doherty, 1966; Doherty and Schweibel, 1972; Belasco and Alluto, 1972; Vaughan, 1976). This study is unique in that it looks at what impact a strike has on the teachers' perceptions of the school's operating procedures and the principal's leadership style after the strike is settled.

The effects of a strike on educational variables such as organizational climate has been hypothesized, but quality research to measure these effects has been limited, if not impossible to conduct. It is difficult to obtain unbiased pre-strike data to analyze post-strike effects for two reasons. First, it is virtually impossible to know when or even whether a school staff will go on strike. Secondly, if data is collected after indicators for a strike are present, the data may be biased by the attitudes a pending strike arouses. The research to be presented in this paper was able to overcome these two difficulties because the orginial intent of the research was not to study the effects of a strike. The original intent of the research was to study the effects an experimental curriculum program would

have on selected student behaviors. At the time of the pre-testing, there were no indicators of the forthcoming strike. However, after the strike occurred, the usefulness of the un-biased, pre-strike data in the analysis of the effect of a strike on a school's climate and on the principal's leadership style as measured by the post-test was apparent.

METHOD

Description of the Research Design: The original focus of the research study was to evaluate the impact of the experimental curriculum unit being implemented in middle school A. As the analysis of the pre and post tests was completed, some changes in perceived organizational climate and leadership were noticed.

A three-cell matrix of comparison was used in analyzing data from the two instruments. A pre-test/post-test was administered in school A and a post test only was administered in comparison school B.

	Pre	Post
School A	37 s	38 s
School B	X	46 s

s - subjects

The Staff Development School Climate Questionnaire and the Leadership Adaptability Style Inventory were given once in the month of October and again in the month of April 1977. The tests for school B were given at the same time as the post tests in school A. In the month of November, a two-week district-wide strike occurred. After the strike, the data shows marked differences in teacher perceptions of School Climate and Leadership. The authors interviewed 40% of school A staff to find out what the teachers perceived as the reason for the drop in climate scores. All of the faculty members in school A who were interviewed indicated that the climate changed because of the strike. Their perceptions of the principal's leadership style also changed because of the strike.

Subjects: The subjects tested consisted of 37 middle school teachers (18 males and 19 females). They were asked to fill out the Staff Development School Climate Questionnaire which yields a profile of perceived school climate. As has already been mentioned, the subjects were members of a faculty in a middle-school engaged in an innovative program designed to coordinate all academic subjects into an experimental unit. To add perspective, the SDSCQ was administered to a second middle school in the district to obtain a second school profile of teacher-perceived climate. Forty-six faculty members (21 males and 25 females) in this "control" school were tested. Interviews were later conducted in the study school after the post test to help explain the findings.

Measures: The Staff Development School Climate Questionnaire (SDSCQ), developed by one of the authors, contains subscales on five dimensions: (a) Communication; (b) Innovativeness; (c) Advocacy; (d) Decision-Making; and (e) Attitude toward Staff Development. A six-point Likert-type scale (Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree) was used to assess the attitude levels of the subjects on each of the 58 items. A low score on any item (and correspondingly on any subscale) would indicate that the respondent did not agree with the positively stated item. Some items (4, 10, 17, 42) were reversed to add variation to the questionnaire and keep the respondent "honest".

The subscale of Communication (13 items) was designed to measure respondents' perceptions as to how well information is shared among groups such as the school board, the central office, the building principal, and teachers. (Example: Teachers in this school feel free to talk to each other about their work). Communication is defined as the listening to concerns as well as the ease with which ideas are exchanged among groups and cliques.

The subscale of Innovativeness (12 items) measures the respondents' perceptions of how well educational innovations have been supported in the past by the school board, the central office, the building principal, and teachers. (Example: The faculty at this school are generally quick to adopt improved

teaching methods). Innovation is defined as the use of new ideas in the classroom.

The subscale of Advocacy (13 items) measure the respondents' perceptions concerning the rapport and professionalism that exists among professional staff members. (Example: The principal makes a real effort to improve working conditions at this school). Advocacy also connotes the concerns for teacher welfare that are demonstrated by the school board, central office administrators, and the building principal.

The subscale of Decision-Making (9 items) measures the respondents' perceptions as to the amount of opportunity there is for input into decisions made at this school board level, central office level, and building principal level. (Example: The teachers in this building are generally involved in decisions related to their work).

The subscale of Attitude toward Staff Development (12 items) measures attitudes the individual has toward inservice education in general and specific inservice activities sponsored by the school system. This subscale includes three themes which are broadly grouped in terms of attitudes in relation to Individual Growth, Classroom Application, and Application to System Needs. A relationship was sought between the relevancy and utility of inservice activities as perceived by teacher participants in the activities and subsequent use of what was learned by individual teachers in classroom situations. (Example: Staff development/inservice activities in this district contribute to the improvement of the curriculum).

It should be noted that although attitude toward inservice activities is not usually thought of as a climate indicator by most authors reporting on climate, this subscale showed a high correlation with the traditional climate indicators such as communication, decision-making and openness to innovations.

The original SDSCQ instrument contained a total of 63 items. When psychometric analyses of the data were completed, this number was reduced to 58 items within the five subscales. Internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach, 1961)

for the revised instrument by subscale were: (a) Communication .84; (b) Innovativeness .87; (c) Advocacy .83; (d) Decision-making .81; and (e) Attitude Toward Staff Development .92. Within each subscale the internal consistency was quite acceptable.

The Leadership Adaptability Style Inventory contains 12 items with four multiple choice responses. The LASI gives hypothetical management situations and asks the respondent to predict what the principal would do in that particular situation. Through the responses, a frequency count of predictions is gained that gives a profile of the perceived leadership style of the principal. That style can be one of four types; 1) High on task behavior-low on relationship behavior, 2) High on task behavior - High on relationship behavior, 3) Low on task behavior High on relationship behavior, 4) Low on task behavior - Low on relationship behavior.

Description of Analysis Techniques: Using the SAS computer program on the pre and post test scores of the SDSCQ for school A and between post scores of school A and B, an univariate analysis of variance was performed to test for significance. To compensate for small sample size and to judge for practical significance, confidence intervals were computed.

RESULTS

As the pre-test scores indicate, most teachers felt that communication in the fall was fairly open; there was support for innovative ideas; there was concern for teacher welfare and opportunity for input into school decisions; and inservice activities has some relevancy to teacher classroom needs. Not only was the climate fairly open, but there was, furthermore, very little difference of opinion among teachers on four of the five subscales as indicated by the low standard deviation scores.

Chart #1

Sub-Scale	Items	Pre Test Mean	SD	N	Post Test Mean	SD	N	T-Test	Confidence Intervals Mean Difference
Communication	(12)	55.98	4.5	38	48.19	6.8	37	0.0001	7.79 ± 2.62
Innovation	(12)	49.48	6.2	38	43.89	7.0	37	0.0011	5.59 ± 3.00
Advocacy	(13)	55.81	4.6	38	49.04	6.8	37	0.0001	6.77 ± 2.63
Decision Making	(9)	41.58	3.4	38	35.72	5.4	37	0.0001	5.86 ± 2.05
Inservice	(12)	44.47	11.0	38	37.21	12.0	37	0.0136	7.26 ± 5.21

The univariate analysis of pre and post test SDSCQ climate scores of school A shows a significant drop in positive attitudes (Chart #1) on all five attitude subscales of Communication, Innovation, Advocacy, Decision-Making and Attitude toward Staff Development to the .01 level of significance. After the strike, the climate was not perceived by teachers as quite so open or supportive. The post test mean scores indicate that communication of ideas and information was curtailed. Teachers perceived less support for innovative ideas, less opportunity for input into school decision-making, and less concern for faculty welfare. They also perceived that inservice activities were less relevant.

Confidence intervals reveal in the subscales of Communication, Innovation, Advocacy, and Decision-Making that 95% of the time other sample populations tested will fall within a small mean difference range (cut off being 3). In the subscale of Attitudes toward Staff Development, the confidence level is not as respectable because of high standard deviations.

The Univariate analysis comparing post climate scores of school A with the post climate scores of school B show no significance differences on the attitude subscales of Communication, Innovations, Advocacy, and Staff Development (See Chart #2). A significant difference was found on the attitudes toward Decision-Making Scale. (.002 level of significance).

Chart #2

Sub Scale	Items	School A Post Test Mean	SD	N	School B Post Test Mean	SD	N	T-Test
Communication	(12)	48.19	6.8	37	46.17	7.3	46	.219
Innovation	(12)	43.89	7.0	37	43.41	7.4	46	.773
Advocacy	(13)	49.04	6.8	37	47.06	7.6	46	.241
Decision Making	(9)	35.72	5.4	37	31.77	5.5	46	.002*
Staff Development	(12)	37.21	12.0	37	37.79	7.6	46	.795

Since the scores for teachers in School B do not differ significantly from scores of teachers in School A, the analysis indicates that the perceptions of teachers in School A may relfect teacher perceptions of school climate throughout

the district. Teachers in School B feel that they have even less input into the decisions made in their school than in School A, even though teachers in School A feel that they do not have as much input into school decisions as they did have before the strike.

Because the questionnaire asked the respondent to make judgments about who supported innovations or facilitated decision making (i.e. the faculty are generally quick to adopt improved teacher methods, or the principal of this school is generally quick to support improved teaching methods) an univariate analysis as one on all four subgroups of Peers, Principal, Central Office, and School Board contained in the SDSCQ Climate Questionnaire. (See Chart #3)

Chart #3

Sub Groups	Items	Pre-Test	SD	N	Post Test	SD	N	T-Test
Peers	(15)	69.51	4.9	38	63.93	7.5	37	0.007
Principal	(15)	82.33	6.3	38	67.13	11.5	37	0.0001
Central Office	(9)	28.73	6.6	38	25.03	8.5	37	0.052
School Board	(9)	24.50	6.9	38	22.74	7.1	37	0.312

It can be seen that attitudes changed significantly toward peers and the school principal, slightly toward the central office and very little towards the school board. The pre and post test scores indicate that the principal was no longer perceived by teachers as communicating ideas freely, supporting their innovative ideas, concerned for their welfare, and allowing for much input into school decisions. It is clear that the relationship between the faculty and the principal had changed significantly. Relationships among peers changed along these same dimensions because some teachers participated in the strike while others did not.

A chi square analysis of the Leadership Adaptability Style Inventory shows a significant change in the way the faculty perceived the principal leadership style. (See Chart #4)

Chart #4

Leadership Style	N	Obtained Raw Scores (O)	Expected Scores (E)	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	X^2
Pre Test						
HTLR	38	58	62.4	4.4	19.36	.31
HTHR	38	177	166.5	10.5	110.22	.66
LTHR	38	137	126.3	10.7	114.49	.90
LTLR	38	25	41.6	16.6	275.56	6.62
Post Test						
HTLP	37	74	69.5	4.5	20.25	.29
HTHR	37	175	185.4	10.4	108.16	.58
LTHR	37	130	140.6	10.6	112.36	.79
LTLR	37	63	46	16.7	278.89	6.02
					Total	16.17
					Sig.	.05

Df=3

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions: What can be said from these findings is that: 1) The strike drastically changed the way teachers perceived the school climate in School A, in School B, and probably in the rest of the district as well. By noting the increase in standard deviation scores, it is easy to see that teacher perceptions became more polarized. 2) Most change occurred in perceptions related to faculty peer relationships and the perceptions of the principal's accessibility and receptivity. 3) The central office and school board suffered minimal loss of credibility perhaps because, as the scores indicate, their credibility was low to start with. It is logical and predictable that a strike would cause a change in the way teachers perceive certain school operations, principal behavior, and central office and school board procedures. The authors feel this study is interesting because: 1) there is hard data to substantiate the relationship between school climate and a teacher strike and 2) all five climate indicators were changed as a result of a teacher strike. It would seem predictable that the subscales of decision-making and advocacy would change.

However, perceived support for innovative classroom techniques declined, too. Teachers became less receptive towards inservice activities. They saw inservice activities as less relevant to their classroom needs. The free sharing of ideas and information was perceived as less probable and possible. This drop in communication also shows less trust among colleagues and the gradual formation of cliques and informal groups among school staff members.

The interviews of faculty members that were conducted to learn more about the changes in teachers' perceptions of school climate showed not only that the strike changed teachers' feelings about school climate; it also gave the authors more understanding about what the principal did to change his leadership style which contributed to teachers feeling isolated and less involved in decision-making. After the strike, the principal spent less time in classrooms, in the hall, and in the faculty lounge; but instead, spent large amounts of time in his office. After the strike, when school meetings were held, his behavior was curt, and decisions were "told" to the faculty rather than discussed with the faculty. What had once been trustful, easy-flowing, congenial relationships between the principal and the faculty, individually and collectively, became labored and formal. In other words, the principal either left faculty members alone or told them what he wanted done in a very directive "top-down" manner.

It should be noted that principals in general do not have much to do with collective bargaining; nor did this particular principal. The interviews revealed that both teachers and the principal became "disappointed" with the behavior and motives of the other during the period of the strike, and this disappointment was manifested and harboured four months after the strike and is reflected in the drop in the climate index.

Because some teachers did not strike and instead crossed the picket lines along with the principal, hard feelings and resentments resulted. These resentments

are manifested in lower climate scores and larger standard deviation scores. While the bargaining took place (for over two weeks), mistrust, resentment and ill feelings continued to develop at the building level. Important interpersonal relationships needed to reach consensus, maintain camaraderie, and maintain commitment to building and district goals were definitely strained between the principal and teachers and between the teachers who went on strike and the teachers who didn't.

Implications: The importance of school climate cannot be stressed enough*. If interpersonal communication among peers, between the principal and teachers, teachers and the central office, and teachers and the school board declines, misunderstanding and conflict will tend to increase which is what happened in School A. If there is a decline in perceived openness to innovative techniques and attitudes towards inservice, then it is likely that those activities will be less efficient and effective. If there is a lack of teacher input into the decision-making process of the school, then teacher commitment to the implementation of those decisions will be less likely. In short, the school with a lower climate index will show less enthusiasm, efficiency, teacher satisfaction, and, as research has shown, probably decreased effectiveness with students. (Hashway 1977, Brookover et al 1978).

In summary, a strike costs a system more than money. It inevitably costs the district the goodwill, credibility and trust that must be present between teachers and administrators and among teachers to truly make a school building a humane and productive place.

*For an elaboration of the importance of school climate see Zigarmi and Edeburn, 1978; Fox, et. al. 1973; Breckenridge 1976.

REFERENCES

Andrews, J. "Looking Beyond the Strikes". Childhood Education, Vol. 45, No. 8, April, 1969, pp. 454-56.

Baird, R.W. and Landon, J H., "The Effects of Collective Bargaining on Public School School Teachers' Salaries". Industrial & Labor Relations Review, Vol. 25, No. 3, April, 1972.

Barkelew, A.H. "How to Face Employee Unions Activities with Class". Thrust For Education Leadership. Vol. 64, No. 4, March, 1977, pp. 15-17.

Belasco, J.A. & Alleto, J.A. "Decisional Participation and Teacher Satisfaction". Education Administration, Winter, 1972, pp. 44-48.

Blum, Albert A. "Research on Teacher Unionism". Journal of Collective Negotiations, Vol. 5, 1, 1976.

Breckenridge, Eileen. "Improving School Climate". Phi Delta Kappan Vol. 58, No. 4, December, 1976, pp. 314-319.

Brookover, W.B. "Elementary School Social Climate and School Achievement". American Educational Research Journal. Vol. 15, No. 2, Spring, 1978, pp. 301-318.

Bruno, J.E. and Nelken, Ira. "An Emperical Analysis on Propensity For Teachers to Strike". Education Administration Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 22, Spring, 1975, pp. 66-85.

Caldwell, W.E., and Chichura A. "Change From Strife to Accommodation in Organizational Behavior as Affected by Collective Bargaining: A Case Study". Paper presented at AERA, March, 1978.

Corwin, R.G. "Militant Professionalism, Initiative and Compliance in Public Education". Sociology of Education, Vol. 38, No. 4, Summer, 1965, pp. 310-331.

Doherty, R.E., "The Impact of Teacher Organization Upon Setting School Policies". The Clearing House, Vol. 30, No. 9, May, 1966, pp. 515-25.

Doherty, R.E. and Schweibel M, "The Impact of Collective Negotiative on Policy Making in New Jersey Schools". Institute of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers, June, 1972.

Education. U.S.A. National School Public Relations Association, Arlington, Virginia, March, 13, 1978, p. 210.

Fox, Robert. School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator. A CFK Ltd. Occasional Paper, Englewood, Colorado, 1973.

Hashway, R. "Long Range Effects of Teacher Strikes on Student Attitudes". Educational Research Quarterly. Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring, 1977, pp. 12-21.

Kasper, H. "The Effects of Collective Negotiations on Public School Teachers Salaries". Industrial and Labor Review. 24: 1, October 1970, pp. 72-77.

Klaus, I., "The Evolution of a Collective Bargaining Relationship in Public Education: New York City's Changing Seven Year History". Michigan Law Review 67, March, 1969, pp. 1033-1066.

Lieberman, M. and Moskow, M.H. Collective Negotiations For Teachers, Rand McNally, New York. 1966.

McGinley, D.J. and Rafferty, B.F. "The Principal and the Teachers' Strike". Urban Education 10, 1. April, 1978, pp. 49-53.

Miskel, C. "Teacher and Administrator Attitudes Towards Collective Negotiation Issues". Education and Urban Society. Vol. 6, No. 3, May, 1974.

Nicholson, E.W. and Nasstrom, R.R. "The Impact of Collective Negotiations on Principals". NASSP Bulletin, October, 1974, pp. 100-107.

Peterson, Richard B. "A Cross-Cultural Study of Secondary School Teachers' Attitudes Regarding Job Satisfaction, Professionalism, and Collective Negotiations". Journal of Collective Negotiations. Vol. 5, No. 2, 1976.

Report On Educational Research. Capitol Publications. Washington, D.C., May 31, 1976, p. 5.

Thornton, R.J. "The Effect of Collective Negotiations on Relative Teachers' Salaries". Southern Economic Association, Paper, 1970.

Vaughn, J.A. "The Expanding Role of Teachers in Negotiating Curriculum". Journal of Educational Leadership. Vol. 34, No. 1, October, 1976, pp. 21-23.

"When Teachers Go Out on Strike". National Elementary Principal. Vol. 56, No. 4, March/April, 1977, pp. 49-53.

Willow, D.J. "Relationship between teacher union strength and the distribution of influence attributed to hierarchial levels in school districts". Peabody Journal of Education. Vol. 52, No. 2, January, 1975, pp. 150-154.

Zigarmi, D. and Edeburn C. "Organizational Climate and IGE: An Assessment and Implications". AIGE Forum Vol. 3, No. 2, Fall, 1978.